Organisation's investment is declining and to strike a balance between the rate of earning and rate of interest offered to workers, it is proposed to consider the option of investing some portion of its assets in equities;

(b) whether it is also a fact that private provident funds have been allowed super-annuation and gratuity funds to invest upto 5 per cent of their assets in equity of Blue-chip companies;

(c) if so, the quantum of such investment; and

(d) whether any criteria has been laid down for such investment?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) to (d) In view of the general economic scenario of low interest yields, the Employees Provident Fund Organisation's investments are also fetching lower interest yields. The Provident Fund is invested as per the pattern of investment notified by the Government from time to time. The Ministry of Finance has issued a notification dated 24.01.2005 and a corrigendum dated 29.01.2005, prescribing a revised pattern of investment, which allows upto 5 per cent of investment in the equities by all non-govt. Provident Funds, Superannuation and Gratuity Funds, with effect from 01.04.2005. However, the investment in equity is optional.

National Highways in Rajasthan

†*239. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some portions of the National Highways in the State of Rajasthan have not been constructed as per the prescribed standard and a 62 Km. long stretch of these National Highways has been left unconstructed;

(b) whether the Government of Rajasthan has apprised his Ministry of the fact that the width of these National Highways is still inadequate;

(c) the action being taken for upgrading these National Highways into two lane and by when the sanction for the same is likely to be accorded; and

(d) the additional amount required for all this work and by when it is likely to be released?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) National Highways are constructed as per the prescribed standards within the available resources. However, there exists missing links of 62 km length where road has not been constructed. Construction in 10 km of missing links has been sanctioned this year at an estimated cost of Rs. 14.69 crore and in the balanced length construction is targeted to be sanctioned in next two years. Widening of National Highways is being done in a phased manner. During the last two years widening to two lane of approximately 410 km length amounting to Rs. 62.40 crore has been sanctioned. Government of Rajasthan had apprised the requirement of fund amounting to Rs. 230 crore for widening of 1211 km of National Highways in Rajasthan which have been entrusted to them for maintenance and development. During the current year widening to two lanes in 133 km has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 47.67 crore. The widening in the remaining reaches is targeted to be sanctioned in the current and next Five Year Plan.

Sponsorship to sportspersons

*240. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to fully sponsor sportsmen who can finally be trained for international events;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether it is a fact that talented sportspersons from rural areas will not be able to compete in the international events?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI SUNIL DUTT): (a) Development of sports including the scouting and nurturing of talent is, primarily, the responsibility of the concerned National Sports Federations and the State Governments. However, the Government of India is supplementing the efforts of National Sports Federations and State Governments in the following manner:—

(i) Finalization and implementation of Long Term Development Plans (LTDPs) for various sports disciplines in consultation with the